

1 Kings 22 – Thursday, January 21st, 2016

1 Now three years passed without war between Syria and Israel. 2 Then it came to pass, in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went down to visit the king of Israel. 3 And the king of Israel said to his servants, "Do you know that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, but we hesitate to take it out of the hand of the king of Syria?"

- It's interesting to note here at the start that Ramoth Gilead is actually one of the cities that Ben-Hadad said he would give back.
- This after Ahab had spared his life, which he did in defiance and disobedience to the command of God Who wanted him killed.
- It appears that true to form the enemy is not keeping his word, which should not come as any surprise, as he never intended to.

4 So he said to Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight at Ramoth Gilead?" Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." 5 Also Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire for the word of the LORD today."

- What Jehoshaphat does here is really quite sad, and this for a couple of reasons, one of which is that he is nothing like Ahab.
- Jehoshaphat was actually one of only 9 good Kings of Israel, and here we see him jumping to ally with a wicked king of Israel.
- This is why he's earned the name of "jumping Jehoshaphat," such that he jumped ahead of God in order to get what he wanted.

- The second thought concerning Jehoshaphat has to do with what we are told in verse five where he has Ahab seek the Lord.
- I point this out because he does what so many of us do, which is to formulate our plans and strategy's before seeking the Lord.
- The lesson here is that we do err greatly when we don't first seek the Lord so as to know what it is that He would have us to do.

6 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall I go against Ramoth Gilead to fight, or shall I refrain?" So they said, "Go up, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king." 7 And Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?" 8 So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!"

- This is a textbook case of someone only wanting to hear what they want to hear and not hear what they actually need to hear.
- Be that as it may, you have to give Jehoshaphat credit for discerning exactly what Ahab was trying to avoid with this Micaiah.
- It seems he knew the reason Micaiah never prophesied good concerning Ahab, is because there's nothing good about Ahab.

9 Then the king of Israel called an officer and said, "Bring Micaiah the son of Imlah quickly!" 10 The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, having put on their robes, sat each on his throne, at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. 11 Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made horns of iron for himself; and he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.'" 12 And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the LORD will deliver it into the king's hand."

- There's something here that I'd like to point out, however, it's not so easily seen at first read having to do with false prophets.
- More specifically, as it relates to the dramatic use of showmanship and entertainment, which is mesmerizing and hypnotizing.
- The point being is these false teachers are alive and well today leading people astray with a showmanship and entertainment.

13 Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king. Please, let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak encouragement." 14 And Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, whatever the LORD says to me, that I will speak."

- To me, this speaks to one of the most difficult temptations all of us face, and it's that of just simply going along with the crowd.
- In other words, don't take a righteous stand and go against the crowd, because if you do, then you will be the only one doing it.
- Micaiah's response in verse fourteen should be indelibly etched on our minds and hearts; whatever God says, that will I speak!

15 Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall we refrain?" And he answered him, "Go and prosper, for the LORD will deliver it into the hand of the king!" 16 So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is it seems Micaiah acquiesced under pressure to the king.
- However, nothing could be further from the truth and it's evidenced by what the king says to him, knowing that he's not truthful.
- I would suggest that Micaiah had a very sarcastic tone in his voice and as such got through to them by his mocking of them.

17 Then he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.'" 18 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

- This is one of those places in scripture where you really have to picture the scene in your mind's eye in order to understand it.
- First it's believed that Ahab had Micaiah thrown into prison, which would have meant that he was there in both rags and chains.
- To make matters worse, Micaiah stands alone up against 400 false prophets who despise him and a king who utterly hates him.

G. Campbell Morgan, "Ahab knew in his heart that Micaiah would not fear or flatter him, but only declare the word of Jehovah. This he construed into personal hatred ... Hatred of the messenger of God is clear evidence of willful wickedness."

19 Then Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left. 20 And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. 21 Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade him.' 22 The LORD said to him, 'In what way?' So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the LORD said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.' 23 Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you."

- This passage is very telling when it comes to undue influence of demonic spirits who are given a voice through false teachers.
- It's important to note the demonic is only allowed to prevail subsequent to one rejecting the love of the truth and believe the lie.
- This is a truth that we talk about often in the context of Bible prophecy after the rapture of the church via the powerful delusion.

2 Thessalonians 2:7-12 (NIV) — 7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, 10 and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

24 Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the spirit from the LORD go from me to speak to you?" 25 And Micaiah said, "Indeed, you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide!"

- Notice how that Micaiah, when struck on the cheek for speaking the truth, does not strike back or even argue with them at all.
- This because, Micaiah knows he doesn't need to because he is on the side of righteousness and he has a sanctified certainty.
- As of late the Lord has been ministering to me the wisdom of not arguing or striking back and instead doing what Micaiah does.

Proverbs 26:4-6 (NKJV) — 4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him. 5 Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes. 6 He who sends a message by the hand of a fool Cuts off his own feet and drinks violence.

26 So the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son; 27 and say, 'Thus says the king: "Put this fellow in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction, until I come in peace."' " 28 But Micaiah said, "If you ever return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Take heed, all you people!"

- I love Micaiah's response here when he basically says that Ahab can send him back to prison but he will soon learn the truth.
- The truth of the matter is, the Lord has spoken to Micaiah, and through Micaiah, and Ahab will meet his appointment with death.
- One has to wonder what's going through Ahab's mind when he says to feed him with just enough bread and water to stay alive.

29 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. 30 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

- If you're anything like me and I suspect you are you're having considerable difficulty understanding why he still allies with Ahab.
- You would think after this whole episode with the prophet Micaiah, Jehoshaphat would immediately end his alliance with Ahab.
- Actually, the reasons as to why he doesn't are the very lessons that we can learn from the life of this good king, Jehoshaphat.

- The first lesson we learn from his life is don't jump every time the Ahab's of this world snap their fingers for us to join with them.
- It's important to note how that Ahab approached Jehoshaphat; Jehoshaphat did not approach Ahab to join in this evil alliance.
- This is where Jehoshaphat made a terrible mistake by allowing himself to be unduly influenced and even easily manipulated.

- This sort of ties into the second lesson we can learn from him. In addition to being manipulated by Ahab he's attractive to Ahab.
- When we live our lives righteous before the Lord, we become magnets that attract the steel of the wicked Ahab's of this world.
- This is true when it comes to young people who know the Lord, they become very attractive to those who don't know the Lord.

- Another lesson that we can learn from Jehoshaphat is saying no to those Ahab's of this world who are usually very persuasive.
- Were Jehoshaphat to have refused to join with Ahab, his life would have been very different, as we'll see in our study yet future.
- Sadly, this leads an otherwise good king, who did good things down the path to a bad end such that he just doesn't finish well.

- This brings us to the next lesson we can learn from his life and it has to do with the Ahab's of this world taking advantage of us.
- I can't get over how shrewd this whole setup was to, in effect remove Jehoshaphat's ability to be firm and go against the crowd.
- The Ahab's of this world come on strong to take advantage of us, which often times requires us to be firm and blunt with them.

- Another very important lesson to learn from him is to never ever go against the check that God places in your heart to stop you.
- Jehoshaphat even had a word from the Lord that this was wrong on every level, yet he pushes that aside and does it anyway.
- I'm of the belief that deep down in his heart, Jehoshaphat knew this wasn't the Lord's will but that he wanted to be liked by man.

- Another equally important if not more important lesson to learn from Jehoshaphat is to be honest and say that you are wrong.
- What's really striking to me in all of this is that were he to simply admit that he had made a mistake, he could have got out of it.
- Not only doesn't he do this, he doesn't have the backbone to stand up to Ahab and his 400 false prophets concerning their evil.

- This last one is the most interesting to me personally because he allowed his son Jehoram to marry Ahab's daughter Athaliah.
- In other words, at the root of this was an unequal yoke of sorts in the sense that he had already formed an unrighteous alliance.
- While this certainly does not excuse what he does, it may in some way explain what he does, and also explain why he does it.

31 Now the king of Syria had commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots, saying, "Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel." 32 So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "Surely it is the king of Israel!" Therefore they turned aside to fight against him, and Jehoshaphat cried out. 33 And it happened, when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.

- I have to say that I don't quite understand how Ahab was able to convince Jehoshaphat to allow him to disguise himself as king.
- Moreover, I don't really quite understand why Jehoshaphat would agree to not disguise himself and where his robe as the king.
- Truly, he must've known that this was going to happen. Perhaps it's due to the aforementioned principle of wanting to be liked.

One commentator had some additional insight into this, "Going into the battle, Ahab did not want to be identified as a king and therefore be a special target. He thought this would help protect him against Micaiah's prophecy of doom. It is more difficult to explain why Jehoshaphat agreed to go into the battle as the only clearly identified king. Perhaps he was either not very smart or he had very great faith."

34 Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded." 35 The battle increased that day; and the king was propped up in his chariot, facing the Syrians, and died at evening. The blood ran out from the wound onto the floor of the chariot. 36 Then, as the sun was going down, a shout went throughout the army, saying, "Every man to his city, and every man to his own country!"

- Notice the details we have woven into the fabric of the narrative, first, that it was a "certain man," who "drew a bow at random."
- Clearly this man and his bow have the fingerprints of God's judgment all over them, such that, He metes out Ahab's judgment.
- I find it rather interesting that Ahab thought he could outsmart God by disguising himself in battle to prove Micaiah was wrong.

- The fact of the matter is, not only was Micaiah right, so too was Elijah when he prophesied exactly how Ahab would be killed.
- More specifically, that he would die in battle this way, and that every man would flee to his city and every man to his country.
- Here's the bottom line, no plan will ever prevail against the Lord Who knows the beginning from the end and the end of man.

Adam Clarke of this wrote, "It appears that the Israelites and Jews maintained the fight the whole of the day; but when at evening the king died, and this was known, there was a proclamation made, probably with the consent of both Syrians and Israelites, that the war was over."

37 So the king died, and was brought to Samaria. And they buried the king in Samaria. 38 Then someone washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood while the harlots bathed, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken. 39 Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, the ivory house which he built and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

- This is exactly what was prophesied would happen in chapter 21 down to the graphic description of dogs licking up his blood.
- I suppose you could say that when God says it, that will settle it. Let God be true and let every man be a liar, all 400 of them.
- I can't help but think of Micaiah who sits in a jail knowing full well that the word he spoke will come to pass exactly as God said.

Of this one commentator said, "And now what joy could Ahab's black soul, ready to depart, have of his ivory house? Who had not rather be a Micaiah in the jail than Ahab in the chariot? Wicked men have the advantage of the way, godly men of the end."

40 So Ahab rested with his fathers. Then Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

- What's truly sad about Ahab is had he but obeyed the Lord in the first place and killed Ben-Hadad this wouldn't have happened.
- Truth be made known, this is exactly why it is that God had commanded Ahab to kill and not pardon Ben-Hadad to begin with.
- Would to God that we would be obedient in putting to death the Ben-Hadad's in our lives, lest they be the ones who kill us first.

Romans 8:13 (NKJV) — 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Colossians 3:5–7 (NIV) — 5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

- There's one more thing I would like to point out before we move on to verse 41 and it has to do with Ahab's greed and idolatry.
- Notice how that the narrative makes mention of all the material successes of Ahab as it relates to all that he had built and done.
- The reason I point this out is because this is what the world does today by deeming one's life a success in the material arena.

One commentator said it best this way, "By materialist standards the reign of Ahab was a success. He was generally militarily successful and enjoyed a generally prosperous economy. Yet spiritually his reign was a disaster, one of the worst ever for Israel."

41 Jehoshaphat the son of Asa had become king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. 42 Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 43 And he walked in all the ways of his father Asa. He did not turn aside from them, doing what was right in the eyes of the LORD. Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for the people offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.

- While Jehoshaphat did what was right in the sight of the Lord, he would not end well because he left the idolatrous high places.
- I'd venture to say there's not a one of us who doesn't want to hear the Lord say, "well done good and faithful servant, enter in."
- However, there is the possibility that like Jehoshaphat, it could be said of us they did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, but.

44 Also Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. 45 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, the might that he showed, and how he made war, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 46 And the rest of the perverted persons, who remained in the days of his father Asa, he banished from the land. 47 There was then no king in Edom, only a deputy of the king. 48 Jehoshaphat made merchant ships to go to Ophir for gold; but they never sailed, for the ships were wrecked at Ezion Geber.

- This passage here and the next passage, which ends the chapter and with it the book is actually an introduction to 2nd Kings.
- It's important to understand that the book of Kings is actually one book in its entirety in the sense that it is a running narrative.
- The reason I mention this is because we're going to learn more about Jehoshaphat and all that he did as it relates to the ships.

49 Then Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships." But Jehoshaphat would not. 50 And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place.

- Here again we're provided with an interesting detail about how Jehoshaphat would actually say no to making another alliance.
- To his credit, it seems that he learned his lesson concerning unrighteous alliances with wicked kings after his past experience.
- One should note that this happened after a disastrous shipping venture, which is what it often takes to get our attention.

51 Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. 52 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; 53 for he served Baal and worshiped him, and provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done.

- It's no wonder that this Ahaziah would do evil in the sight of the Lord given his father was Ahab, and his mother was Jezebel.
- It's a sad commentary on one's life when they don't learn from the folly of their parents and instead repeat it or even exceed it.
- It's been said that it's not so much what's taught as much as what's caught. In other words, children learn from what they see.

Of this Ahaziah, one commentator wrote, "It is a dark catalogue of iniquity, yet only what might be expected of the offspring of such a couple as Ahab and Jezebel."

- That's not to say that bad children will always come from bad parents or that good children will always come from good parents.
- As we see with the Kings of Israel, we see bad kings come from good kings, and conversely, good kings come from bad kings.
- That said, the book of 1st Kings ends as an introduction to the book of 2nd Kings, which we will begin next week Lord willing.